

Arizona State Board For Charter Schools Newsletter

May 2001



Since our last newsletter there have been some changes to the Board. First of all, for those of you who do not know, Mary Gifford has left the state to continue to develop public policy on education reform with the Makinac Center for Public Policy in Michigan. Although Mary's leaving will be a loss to Arizona, I am sure her talents and intellect will assist us all in the education reform arena. Although we will miss having her close at hand, I am sure she will not forget Arizona and the charter movement she championed within our state. Knowing Mary, she will only be a phone call away. Our thanks and best wishes go out to her and we will await her return someday.

Onnie Sherkerjian, an education activist with one of 3 children in a charter school, joined our board recently. She has been a charter school advocate and understands the challenges many of you face in the operation of your schools.

Mary Lynn Kelly owns her own business-consulting firm. She previously served as Editor for Arizona Parenting Magazine. She has prior board experience and certainly brings her talents as a business owner to her position on our board. Mary Lynn has 3 young children, adding to her busy agenda along with her community activities.

Dan Diethelm was elected President of the Board on March 19, 2001. Onnie Sherkerjian was elected to serve as Vice President.



Marty Condos resigned from the charter board staff as of March 31. She will be missed. Her charter law knowledge special education expertise, her innate ability to soothe and educate parents and the schools, allowed us to resolve issues and understand the needs of all parties. We have had many lively discussions about charter policy issues, fees, etc. but I bet she won't miss the discussion on our perpetual "Rules" process. Marty worked with the board for over 3 years and assisted with the formulation of policy and procedures, focusing on the needs of the schools and helping to strategically plan for the agency's future. We all wish her the best and thank her for all she did to foster the growth of our charter schools.

Congratulations!!

As many of you know, Kristen Jordison was appointed Executive Director to the charter school board. Kristen takes the leadership of the Board upon the resignation of Cassandra A. Larsen who left to serve as Chief of Staff for Superintendent of Public Instruction, Jaime Molera. Per the press release, Board President Dan Diethelm states, "Kristen has done an outstanding job for the agency and has the skills that we believe will take the agency to the next level of success for the charter schools that we sponsor. She will provide the staff and the Board with the leadership necessary as we continue to strive to sponsor the best charter schools in Arizona." Congratulations Kristen!

Welcome

DeAnna Foulds joined the charter board staff on June 11th. DeAnna is a former charter operator and currently holds a Masters in Education with an emphasis in curriculum instruction. She comes to us with a wealth of charter school knowledge and will use her expertise of curriculum development and implementation when serving our schools. "I believe that parents should have choices in the education of their children and am excited to be in a position that supports others who are courageous enough to take on the challenge of creating educational opportunities for Arizona students." Welcome aboard DeAnna!!

Traci Sawyer has joined the charter board staff and is currently working on the 5-year reviews and doing everything all of the staff does on a daily basis. Traci comes to us with charter school experience gained at an "amazing charter school", as she says. Traci will provide us with the professionalism and expertise necessary to be a part of our staff. Welcome Traci!

THANK YOU CASSANDRA!

The staff at the charter school board wishes to thank Cassandra Larsen for all her hard work and dedication as Executive Director for the past three years. She believes in the charter school movement and will carry that belief with her in her new position as Chief of Staff for Jaime Molera, State Superintendent of Public Instruction. We have the utmost confidence that Cassandra will achieve great things in her new post. She will be dearly missed but it is comforting to know we have an advocate of charter schools always close at hand. Best wishes Cassandra.

Our new website...

...only a click away!



After much planning and preparation, we are pleased to announce the new website for the Arizona State Board for Charter Schools. The website will provide an abundance of information as well as documents which are needed to update charter contracts such as amendments, notifications, site notifications, and USFRCS & Procurement requests. Also included are applications for new charters and transfer charters for existing schools sponsored by a school district or the state board of education. The website will also include a parents brochure with information relating to parent choice, concerns, and options. What would make the website even better??? Since parents and the community would also be visiting our website, we would like to showcase pictures of the charter schools we sponsor, but in order to do this, we need your help. Please send your pictures **via e-mail to** sawyer_traci@pop.state.az.us. Check us out at www.asbcs.state.az.us.

Reminders:

You need to have fingerprint reports on file for all non-certified staff. Also, you must have resumes of all teachers available to be viewed by the public.

Any time a written complaint about a particular school is received by this office the school is notified by fax or mail. The school has ten days to respond, in writing, to the complaint. After 10 days the complaint is placed into the school's public file, with or without the school's response. The Arizona State Board for Charter Schools will become involved in complaints that concern safety issues and contractual violations.

As a public school you must accept students with special needs. It is not a matter of being staffed, equipped, or prepared to do so. Contact your Special Ed Consultant if you have questions. Our office can give you the name of your assigned consultant if you do not have that information readily available.

As a public school you may not charge tuition or fees for classes and/or supplies that are part of your required instructional program. You may charge a book deposit for textbooks, but a waiver must be available for those who cannot meet the financial obligation. You may not **charge for consumable instructional** materials such as workbooks, magazines, paperbacks, etc.

Workshops in the Planning

In an effort to assist the schools sponsored by the State Board for Charter Schools with changes in legislation and accountability issues, this office will be conducting regional workshops. All charter operators would be welcome at every workshop. However, we understand that the concerns of veteran operators may not be the same as new operators and would like to plan our workshops around your needs.

Please take a minute or two to email or fax our office with the following information.

1. School Name
2. Preferred workshop time. (morning, evening, weekend)
3. Issues or topics you'd like to have addressed.
4. Would you like to host the workshop?
What would be the maximum occupancy?

Email your responses to Foulds_DeAnna@popo.state.az.us or fax us at 602-468-1682.

Who is the Arizona State Board for Charter Schools?



We could make that a multiple choice or fill in the blank question, but with some of the recent changes in Board Members and Office Staff it would only be fair to provide you with the correct answer first.

The Board Members are:

Dan Diethelm, President
Cassandra Larsen, Superintendent Designee
Onnie Shekerjian, Vice President
James Gibson
Cookie Goddard
Mary Lynn Kelly
Steve Twist

You'd be hard pressed to find bigger supporters of charter schools than the current staff at the State Board for Charter Schools. It is our hope that you'll use us as a resource.

Kristen Jordison, Executive Director
Monica Ulloa
Mike Barragan
Traci Sawyer
DeAnna Foulds

One goal of the staff is to be out and about visiting your sites this year.

We look forward to observing classes, visiting with your students and staff, and seeing those things that make your school unique and successful.

Schools that are in their fifth year of operation will be contacted early in the fall to schedule their Five Year Reviews.